

Don't Run With Scissors!

July 2011

Safety Communiqué from the Technical Division Head



By: Giorgio Apollinari, Technical Division Head

Fermilab is vigilant in regularly inspecting all working areas. You may have seen our safety, firefighter and security personnel walking through the buildings, checking fire extinguishers and verifying that emergency lighting is in place, as well as watching for fire hazards such as use of extension cords, blocked easements, and proper heaters.

Safety is not only the responsibility of officials, though. It is up to every employee to regularly inspect their areas for hazards that may appear, such as boxes that block aisles, cords that may have been moved, slippery spots from spilled beverages, etc. and if necessary, to notify the building manager of anything dangerous discovered. Not sure who your building manager is? There are signs at the building entries and a list in the back of the organization chart.

INCIDENT BACKGROUND	HOW IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN PREVENTED
While cutting a piece of packaging tape with a razor blade, an employee cut their left ring finger, resulting in a laceration of about one-half inch long. Fortunately the injury required only first aid treatment.	This injury was caused by the employee not using the correct tool for the job. The correct tool, a pair of scissors or a packaging tape dispenser, was not available in the immediate area, so the employee grabbed the closest tool at hand which happened to be the razor blade.
While loading cable into a van in a parking lot, an employee slipped on ice and fell onto their right hip and right elbow. The employee had carried a cable reel out to the van and had placed the reel in the vehicle. As he turned to walk away, he slipped on a patch of ice and fell to the ground. The area had been plowed, but patches of snow and ice were still present. The employee did not suffer any injury from the fall, but as a precaution he immediately reported the incident to the Medical Office as he should. No treatment was necessary and he returned to work with no limitations.	A contributing factor to the incident was that although the parking lot had been plowed, local personnel had not followed up with checking the area and applying salt.
After parking and getting out of their car, an employee took one step, then slipped and fell on icy pavement. The employee attempted to break their fall by grabbing onto car door handle, and in so doing, twisted and sprained their back. The employee did not initially report the injury as he should have but rather sat through three meetings. That night, he iced his back and took over the counter pain medication. The employee stated that he was in so much pain the next day that he decided to take a sick day. The employee reported to Medical following his sick day, at which time he was released to work without restrictions.	By not reporting the incident when it occurred, a hazardous situation in the parking lot went unreported.

Most safety experts believe that all accidents can be prevented. As you can see by the prevention column, a little extra care and attention on the part of the individuals might have avoided these accidents from occurring.